

On Thursday, Mrs. Pence brought our three small children to Capitol Hill to help me hand out bottled water and greet hundreds of citizens in the enormous public line of mourners paying their respects to the remains of President Reagan in the Rotunda.

We stood near the point where folks went into the Capitol building after hours in the balmy summer air of over 90 degrees and simply greeted people by saying who we were and how grateful we were that they had come to the Capitol for President Reagan.

I don't know what I expected exactly. I have worked many lines in my political career. Some people shake your hand and some just walk on by but not this line. Everyone took a second to shake our hands and accept our gratitude with very few exceptions. Many stopped for a moment to share their reasons for driving for hours and standing in the heat with genuine emotion in their eyes.

I was overwhelmed by the complexity and diversity in the line. There was West Coast, Midwest, East Coast and Alaska! There were young and old, military and civilian, black and white, rich and poor....this line was America.

And the line my family most often heard, "it's a privilege to be here." And so it was.

As we left after hours of greeting ordinary Americans so deeply touched by this extraordinary leader, I couldn't help but think of what my 12-year-old son Michael said, "Dad, until this week, I never knew how much the American people loved President Reagan."

No truer words. -Mike Pence